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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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RHMFIASS/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 0010
RHMFIASS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 000621

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR P, SCA/FO (DAS GASTRIGHT), SCA/A
NSC FOR FTOWNSEND AND AHARRIMAN
CENTCOM FOR CSTC-A, CG CJTF-76, POLAD, CSTC-A

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/11/2017

TAGS: [NATO](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: APHSCT TOWNSEND'S FEBRUARY 8 MEETING WITH COMISAF

REF: KABUL 368

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald E. Neumann; reasons 1.4(a),(b), and (d).).

¶1. (S) Summary: General McNeill emphasized that ISAF will maintain the initiative, and that the "spring offensive will be mine." He said that, from a military perspective, he does not like the current situation in Musa Qala (reftel). However, he said that he is prepared to leave things as they are, for now, unless called upon for assistance by the GoA, or if the situation in Musa Qala presents a direct life/limb threat to Coalition Forces. Referring to a recent meeting with President Karzai, General McNeill said that Karzai had been more moderate in his remarks regarding Afghan-Pakistani relations than he had ever heard him to be. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) In a February 8 meeting, COMISAF General Dan McNeill discussed the security situation in Afghanistan with Frances Fragos Townsend, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism (APHSCT), and Ambassador Neumann.

Spring Offensive

¶3. (S) General McNeill emphasized that ISAF will maintain the initiative, and that the "spring offensive will be mine." He said that he expects that there will be some intense fighting in the spring/summer, as the Taliban and other insurgents continue to challenge ISAF and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). General McNeill said that he also expects an increase in IED attacks (particularly VBIEDs), and that ISAF is working to mitigate this threat in cooperation with the USG and GoA.

¶4. (S) Reviewing possible cross-border infiltration scenarios, General McNeill commented that the Taliban might conceivably attempt to send fighters around to the west of Kandahar and Helmand provinces, perhaps entering Afghanistan via Nimroz and then heading up to the northeast. He noted that ISAF does not have any forces stationed in Nimroz, and underlined that this is a concern that he is working to address. General McNeill said that criminal activity is the main security threat in the North of Afghanistan. He added

that the ISAF troops currently stationed in the North are spread quite thinly, and are needed there.

Musa Qala

15. (S) General McNeill said that, from a military perspective, he does not like the current situation in Musa Qala (reftel). However, he said that he has informed the UK and GoA that he is prepared to leave things as they are, for now, unless called upon for assistance by the GoA, or if the situation in Musa Qala presents a direct life/limb threat to Coalition Forces. General McNeill said that, if ISAF were to intervene, it would take a measured approach, to avoid unnecessary collateral damage. He noted that neither the Musa Qala tribal elders nor Helmand Governor Wafa had asked for help. General McNeill commented that he believes that the situation, as is, does not compromise ISAF's position with regard to Kajaki, where ISAF is supporting USG efforts to repair a major hydroelectric dam.

Afghan-Pakistani Relations

16. (S) Referring to a recent meeting with President Karzai, General McNeill said that Karzai had been more moderate in his remarks regarding Afghan-Pakistani relations than he had ever heard him to be. While Karzai still maintained that the Pakistani government does not fully understand the risk posed to Pakistan by the Taliban, his overall tone was generally conciliatory. Karzai himself mentioned that he had just

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given a media interview in which he had made a point of taking a moderate line in his comments with regard to Pakistan.

NEUMANN